

## People &amp; Places

## Books

## Serial killer novel

## An imperialist repents in Gangsters of Capitalism

By Frank Bajak

**'Gangsters of Capitalism: Smedley Butler, the Marines, and the Making and Breaking of America's Empire'** by Jonathan M. Katz (St. Martin's Press)

Plenty of US veterans of the country's 21-century "forever wars" — men and women who lost buddies and limbs to roadside bombs and suffer psychic scars — struggle to understand the why behind them. Some wonder: Were they instruments of less-than-noble imperialist adventures?

A century ago, a gimlet-eyed Marine who featured in pretty much every early US empire-building expedition — in Cuba, the Philippines, Panama, Mexico, Nicaragua and Haiti — asked himself the same question. His answer: "Yes." Smedley Butler was the tip of the spear in democracy-thwarting invasions and occupations beginning in 1898 whose beneficiaries included the banker J.P. Morgan and Standard Oil.

Jonathan M. Katz's lively, deeply researched "Gangsters of Capitalism" tracks Butler's three decades of foreign conquest. The 344-page biography follows the blood-soaked transformation of Butler, a Quaker from Philadelphia's Main Line suburbs and congressman's son, from capitalist tool to repentant antiwar activist. Why haven't we heard of Butler before? Perhaps because there's little to glorify here.

The book combines history, scholarship and travelogue. Katz visited nine countries to report it, including China, where Butler was wounded trying to put down the Boxer Rebellion, to help understand how the United States got to where it is now. Perhaps it's no surprise a defeated president was able to rally a violent mob to storm the US Capitol a year ago and nearly thwart what had long been considered a stable democracy.

"Gangsters of Capitalism" is in the vein of a number of recent histories — a category we used to call "revisionism" — that expose the brutality and racism in US expansionism and cast doubt on the oft-repeated claim of American exceptionalism. They include Greg Grandin's Pulitzer-winning "The End of the Myth" and Vincent Bevins' "The Jakarta Method."

Katz's engaging style brings history alive. The veteran foreign correspondent was employed by The Associated Press in Haiti when he learned how Butler and Marines had stormed its parliament in 1917, dissolving it at gunpoint for resisting a US-penned constitution that granted foreigners property ownership rights in the Black Caribbean nation founded by former slaves. It is just one in a litany of violent power plays Butler orchestrated even while recognizing their moral bankruptcy in letters home.

Among deeds weighing heavily on Butler in his later years was how he helped create domestic praetorian "guardias nacionales" in countries including Nicaragua and the Dominican Republic later used by ruthless strongmen as shock troops.

Katz's first book, "The Big Truck That Went By," told how relief that was supposed to help Haitians recover from the terrible 2010 earthquake instead enriched aid workers, military contractors and foreign investors who set up shop to exploit cheap Haitian labor.

"Gangsters of Capitalism" tries to reckon how a highly decorated US soldier — Butler would attain the rank of brigadier general — could act so flagrantly anti-democratic while abroad, overseeing extrajudicial killings, forced labor and election-rigging, then work to try to prevent America from dispatching its youth to die in foreign wars.

There is no evidence Butler gained materially from being "a racketeer for capitalism" — his words — who "helped rape a half a dozen Central American republics for the benefit of Wall Street." His only reward, it seems, was the esteem of his fellow combatants and the veterans whose pension rights he fought for during the Depression. And maybe to teach us a lesson.

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**'Last Seen Alive'** by Joanna Schaffhausen (Minotaur)

When Joanna Schaffhausen first introduced FBI Special Agent Reed Markham and Boston police officer Ellery Hathaway, the author put serial killer Francis Coben at the center of their origin story. And yet, for four straight novels, the monster remained off stage.

Instead, he was portrayed as a hideous specter, haunting every part of Ellery's life since he kidnapped her when she was 14 and nailed her into a closet that had once held at least 16 other girls.

It was Reed who cracked the case and rescued her. Ever since, fate kept throwing them together — first as friends, then as colleagues, and finally in an on-again, off-again romance in which love failed to overcome memories of the horror that brought them together.

Now, in "Last Seen Alive," Coben finally appears, promising to reveal the burial sites of some of his victims. But he has three conditions. Reed must visit him in prison, the crew of a true-crime TV show must record the meeting, and the agent must bring along the person who had haunted Coben's dreams.

He wants Ellery, the lone survivor of his reign of terror.

The TV producer pressures her to accept. Reed urges her to refuse. But Ellery, beset with survivor's guilt, reluctantly agrees, grimly determined to bring closure to the families of other victims.

So begins a fast-paced, complex tale that includes a Coben copycat killer, a daring prison escape, a race to track Coben down before he can kill again, and a brutal take down of TV shows that glorify serial killers for the sake of ratings.

When the police work is finally completed, the evil doers vanquished, and the plot-points resolved, Schaffhausen breaks the unwritten rules for such books by writing another 75 pages. In them, writing with empathy and psychological insight, she reveals how Reed and Ellery at last come to terms with the nightmare they shared through five fine novels and how they plan to live the rest of their lives.

It works not only because it is beautifully crafted but because, unlike nearly all other serial killer books, these novels were never about the killer and his pursuers.

They were about Reed and Ellery, and by extension, all victims of this brutal brand of violence.

In doing so, Schaffhausen has set a new standard for how such books can, and perhaps often should, be written. (AP)



Katz



This image released by Netflix shows Benedict Cumberbatch in a scene from 'The Power of the Dog.' (AP)



Bollywood actor Deepika Padukone poses during the promotion of her film 'Gehraiyaan' in Mumbai, India, Tuesday, Feb. 8. The film is scheduled to premiere on Feb. 11. (AP)



Kilmeade



Vinocur

## Variety

**NEW YORK: John Vinocur**, a much-respected foreign correspondent for The New York Times and The Associated Press and later executive editor and columnist at the International Herald Tribune in Paris, has died, his family announced. He was 81.

Vinocur died in Amsterdam on Sunday while staying with his companion, **Jacqueline Schaaap**, the Times reported, quoting Vinocur's son, **James**. The cause was complication from sepsis.

Among the best-known bylines in the Times and the Herald Tribune from Europe, known for captivating writing and a thorough grasp of the continent's politics, Vinocur was a fixture of the journalistic community in Paris, where he lived for decades. He covered such historic events as the attack on the Israeli Olympic athletes and the convulsions that shook Europe with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

"He loved news and got this little sparkle in his eye when he sensed a good story. He was a true newsman," recalled **Maria Samminiatielli**, a senior AP editor in New York who worked with Vinocur in the 1990s at the Herald Tribune. Vinocur was the paper's editor from 1986-1996.

"John Vinocur was a master of descriptive prose and was probably among the two or three best writers in AP in the last three generations," said **Robert Reid**, senior managing editor at Stars and Stripes who was a colleague of Vinocur's at AP. "He managed to write with color, wit, accuracy and authority. Most writers are lucky if they can master one of those characteristics."

Vinocur, a native of Queens, New York, and graduate of Oberlin College, went overseas for the AP in 1968, covering major events, wars and conflict in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

His scoops included a memorable beat reporting on an injury to heavyweight champ **George Foreman** and causing the postponement of the "Rumble in the Jungle," the championship fight between Foreman and **Muhammad Ali** in Zaire in 1974.

Hired away by the Times, he became the newspaper's bureau chief in Germany from 1977-82 and in Paris from 1982-85. He then worked briefly in New York as metropolitan editor, before returning to Paris to join the Herald Tribune, "then jointly owned by the Times and the Washington

## Film

## Villeneuve's majestic sci-fi epic 'Dune' nabs 10

## 'Power of the Dog' tops Oscar noms

**NEW YORK, Feb. 8, (AP):** Jane Campion's gothic western "The Power of the Dog" led nominations to the 94th Academy Awards, where streaming services more than ever before swept over Hollywood's top honors.

In nominations announced Tuesday, Campion's film landed a leading 12 nominations, including nods for best picture, best director and all of its top actors: Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst, Jesse Plemons and Kodi Smit-McPhee.

Campion, a nominee for 1993's "The Piano," became the first woman to ever be nominated twice for best director. Last year, Chloé Zhao became just the second woman to ever win the award. Campion's director of photography, Ari Wegner, also became the second woman ever nominated for best cinematography. The only previous woman to do so was Rachel Morrison for "Mudbound" in 2018.

Denis Villeneuve's majestic sci-fi epic "Dune" followed closely behind with 10 nominations.

A largely virtual awards season added some unpredictability to this year's nominations, which are occurring later than usual. To make way for the Olympics, the Oscars will be held March 27 and will return to their usual venue, the Dolby Theatre.

The nominees for best picture are: "Belfast"; "The Power of the Dog"; "Dune"; "Drive My Car"; "West Side Story"; "Don't Look Up"; "Licorice Pizza"; "CODA"; "King Richard"; "Nightmare Alley."

Nominations were announced Tuesday morning in Los Angeles by Leslie Jordan and Tracee Ellis Ross.

The nominees for best actress are: Jessica Chastain, "The Eyes of Tammy Faye"; Olivia Colman, "The Lost Daughter"; Penélope Cruz, "Parallel Mothers"; Nicole Kidman, "Being the Ricardos"; Kristen Stewart, "Spencer."

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Post.

After stepping down as executive editor of the Herald Tribune, Vinocur continued to write as a columnist for the IHT and the Times, which had acquired sole ownership. The column, *Politics*, was full of pungent observations on the state of play in diplomacy, often focused on German Chancellor **Angela Merkel** and the West's up-again, down-again relations with the then-emerging Russian leader **Vladimir Putin**.

Alison Smale, a veteran AP correspondent in central Europe who served as manag-

ing editor then executive editor of the International Herald Tribune after Vinocur, said that Vinocur "loved nothing more than to dissect the latest dispute ripping through the Europe he came to admire, but also criticize. John was the first guide to help many of us grasp what it is to be a foreign correspondent."

"Already, he is missed," she added. The breadth and depth of his knowledge on Europe was on display in his columns, often with a touch of irony. Commenting on a rare public show of tensions between

France and Germany — in 2010, at a time when the two countries still were seen as the pillars of an ever-closer union in Europe — Vinocur was droll. "In truth, the idea of the inevitability and even the quasi-sacred character of the French-German relationship is one of the platitudes that have been shaken with the exposure of some of the European Union's existential fibs," he wrote. (AP)

Will Smith, "King Richard"; Javier Bardem, "Being the Ricardos"; Benedict Cumberbatch, "The Power of the Dog" and Andrew Garfield, "Tick, Tick ... Boom!" and Denzel Washington, "The Tragedy of Macbeth."

The nominees for best supporting actress are: Jessie Buckley, "The Lost Daughter"; Ariana DeBose, "West Side Story"; Judi Dench, "Belfast"; Kirsten Dunst, "The Power of the Dog" and Aunjanue Ellis, "King Richard."

The nominees for best supporting actor are: Ciarán Hinds, "Belfast"; Troy Kotsur, "CODA"; Kodi Smit-McPhee, "The Power of the Dog"; Jesse Plemons, "The Power of the Dog" and J.K. Simmons, "Being the Ricardos."

The nominees for original song are: "Be Alive" from "King Richard"; "Dos Oruguitas" from "Encanto"; "Down To Joy" from "Belfast"; "No Time To Die" from "No Time To Die"; "Somehow You Do" from "Four Good Days."

The nominees for best animated feature are: "Encanto"; "Flee"; "Luca"; "The Mitchells vs. the Machines" and "Raya and the Last Dragon."

The nominees for documentary feature are: "Summer of Soul (Or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)"; "Flee"; "Attica"; "Ascension" and "Writing With Fire."

The nominees for best director are: Paul Thomas Anderson, "Licorice Pizza"; Kenneth Branagh, "Belfast"; Jane Campion, "The Power of the Dog"; Steven Spielberg, "West Side Story" and Ryūsuke Hamaguchi, "Drive My Car."

The nominees for best original score are: "Don't Look Up"; "Dune"; "Encanto"; "Parallel Mothers" and "The Power of the Dog."

The nominees for costume design are: "Cruella"; "Cyrano"; "Dune"; "Nightmare Alley"; "West Side Story."

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The nominees for original screen-

play are: "Belfast"; "Don't Look Up"; "King Richard"; "Licorice Pizza" and "The Worst Person in the World."

The nominees for adapted screenplay are: "CODA"; "Drive My Car"; "Dune"; "The Lost Daughter"; and "The Power of the Dog."

In pulling from films released in myriad ways, these Oscar nominations reflect a tumultuous pandemic year for Hollywood that began with many theaters shuttered and ended with Sony Pictures' "Spider-Man: No Way Home" smashing box-office records.

In between, much of the normal rhythm of the movie business was transformed, as studios pushed some of the biggest movies of the year to streaming services in a bid to lure subscribers. Films including "Dune" (despite the objections of its director), Pixar's "Luca" and "King Richard" were among those that went straight to homes.

As COVID-19 cases surged in the last two months due to the omicron variant, much of Oscar season also turned virtual. Last year, the pandemic led the academy to host a delayed Oscars in a socially distanced ceremony at Los Angeles' Union Station. Ratings plummeted to an all-time low of 9.85 million viewers.

This year, the academy has yet to map out plans for its show, except that it will include a host for the first time since 2018. For better or worse, the Academy Awards will also be without its usual lead-in. The Golden Globes in January were an untelevised non-event after NBC said it wouldn't air them in 2022 while the beleaguered Hollywood Foreign Press reformed itself after ethics and diversity criticism.

Other changes were more subtle but potentially impactful. For the first time, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences ruled out hard-copy DVD screeners for its members, who instead could watch submissions on the academy's streaming platform.



This image released by Netflix shows Jessie Buckley in a scene from 'The Lost Daughter.' (AP)

**NEW YORK:** Fox News Channel has shuffled its Saturday night lineup to add hourlong programs hosted by network veteran **Brian Kilmeade** and newcomer **Lawrence Jones**.

Kilmeade has been part of the three-person team that hosts the "Fox & Friends" weekday morning show, where he will continue. He'll host the 8 pm Eastern hour on Saturdays that is being vacated by **Jesse Watters**, who was given his own weekday evening show.

Jones, a reporter on "Fox & Friends," will host "Lawrence Jones Cross Country" at 10 pm Eastern, the show's title a reference to his plans to frequently take it on the road. Jones, 29, will be Fox News Channel's third solo Black show host on air. **Harris Faulkner** and **Arthel Neville** are also hosts.

**Jeanine Pirro** is ending her Fox News weekend show because she has become a regular on "The Five" weekday afternoons.

**Dan Bongino's** Saturday night show will move up an hour to 9 pm. (AP)